

Good News from Parks and Recreation

January 11, 2012 Parks Commission Meeting

Parks and Recreation website: <http://www.duluthmn.gov/parks/index.cfm>

Trail and Bikeway Plan - http://www.duluthmn.gov/parks/trail_bikeway_master_plan.cfm

Parks and Recreation Master Plan - http://www.duluthmn.gov/parks/master_plan.cfm

DNR 10/25 Parks and Trails Legacy Plan - <http://www.legacy.leg.mn/funds/parks-trails-fund/plan>

Sign up for all **Parks and Recreation press releases** and other City announcements at <http://www.duluthmn.gov/> - click the yellow button on the left that says "Subscribe via E-mail".

Like us on Facebook: see the blue facebook icon on our website: <http://www.duluthmn.gov/parks/> or find us on Facebook at DuluthParksMN

Effective January 2012: Our Parks and Recreation office will now be open on Fridays. Our hours will still be 8 am to 4 pm.

Community input needed on design of trail and park directional marker system

The City of Duluth Parks and Recreation Division invites the community to attend a public meeting on Wednesday, January 11, 2012 from 7:00-8:30 PM at the Central Hillside Community Center located at 12 East 4th Street. The purpose of the meeting is discuss and gather input on the development of a new system of trail/park directional or 'wayfinding' signs. We encourage all trail and park users to share their difficulties or barriers to finding parks or trailheads and discuss trail and bikeway signage issues. Information gathered will assist the City to move forward with creating a citywide system of directional 'wayfinding' signs for all trails and parks. If you are unable to attend the meeting, please email your comments to Judy Gibbs at jgibbs@duluthmn.org or mail them to Judy at Parks and Recreation, 12 E 4th St, Duluth, MN 55805.

DECC Skating Party January 22

The third Mayor's DECC Skating Party is scheduled for Sunday, January 22. The skating party will be held in the DECC Arena from 3:00-5:00 PM. Music will be provided by Shelly's Mobile Music Machine. There will be free door prizes for the kids. All skating parties are free and open to all ages. Participants need to bring their own skates. The last skating party will be held on February 26.

Bentleyville Tour of Lights Attendance Reaches 200,000

Bentleyville's Tour of Lights drew 200,000 visitors to Bayfront Festival Park this year. Warm temperatures contributed to the increase in attendance this year along with the new and innovative displays. Plans are underway for Bentleyville 2012 with the addition of several new lighting displays.

Warmer by the Lake joins Bentleyville Tour of Lights

Warmer by the Lake was held at Bayfront Festival Park on the last day of Bentleyville Tour of Lights, Monday, December 26 - and it was truly "warmer by the lake" with the temperature reaching 47 degrees! Carriage rides, a bon fire, marshmallow roasting, and skating was available to everyone from 3:00-6:30 PM. At 6:30 PM, visitors were amazed at the spectacular fireworks display. After the fireworks display, visitors enjoyed the final night of Bentleyville Tour of Lights.

Play Time for tots and parents

Now offered at the Duluth Heights Community Center on Wednesdays, from 9 – 11 am, Play Time is a great opportunity for socializing, making new friends, and having fun. There is open space for toddlers and preschool age children to play. Age-appropriate toys are provided for parents to supervise their own children. There is no fee to participate and it is open to the whole community.

Chester Bowl Ski Hill –

Duluth Parks and Recreation's Chester Bowl ski hill opened for the season on Monday, December 19. Regular ski lift operations will be as follows: open Mondays, Thursday, and Fridays from 4:30-8:30 PM and Saturday and Sunday from 11:00 AM-4:30 PM. Closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

The daily lift ticket rate for all ages is only \$5.25 per day. Individual season lift ticket is \$106.62 (\$50 refund with 3 volunteer hours) and a family lift ticket is \$165.59 (\$75 refund with 6 hours of volunteer hours). Besides being very affordable, Chester Bowl is a great place to learn how to downhill ski for people of all ages. Chester Bowl is located in the heart of Duluth at 1800 East Skyline Parkway. For more information go to www.chesterbowl.org or call Thom Storm at 218-724-9832.

Ice Skating at the Heritage Sports Center (120 South 30th Ave West). All skating sessions are free. Attendance at the skating sessions has been great, averaging about 100 people each time.

Wednesday - January 11	6:30-8:00 PM
Wednesday-January 18	6:30-8:00 PM
Wednesday - January 25	6:30-8:00 PM
Friday - January 20	1:30-3:00 PM (No School - Semester Break)
Friday - January 27	1:30-3:00 PM (Early Release School Day)

Wednesday - February 1	6:30-8:00 PM
Wednesday - February 8	6:30-8:00 PM
Wednesday - February 15	6:30-8:00 PM

No School - Winter Recess

Monday - February 20	1:30-3:00 PM
Tuesday - February 21	1:30-3:00 PM
Wednesday - February 22	1:30-3:00 PM
Thursday - February 23	1:30-3:00 PM
Friday - February 24	1:30-3:00 PM
Wednesday - February 29	6:30-8:00 PM

Wednesday - March 7	6:30-8:00 PM
Wednesday - March 14	6:30-8:00 PM
Friday - March 16	1:30-2:30 PM (Early Release School Day)
Wednesday - March 21	6:30-8:00 PM
Wednesday - March 28	6:30-8:00 PM

Bayfront Festival Park Winter Skating

Skating is available at the City of Duluth's premier outdoor skating rink at Bayfront Festival Park. Surrounded by 20-30 foot tall pine trees, Bayfront skating is a wonderful experience. Come in from the cold and warm up near the fireplace in the Bayfront Family Center. The center is open to the public Monday-Friday from 4:00-8:00 PM, Saturday 1:00-8:00 PM, Sunday 1:00-5:00 PM, and most school holidays 1:00-8:00 PM, weather permitting. The recent warm, sunny weather has melted much of the rink. Once colder weather arrives, the rink can be re-built.

Ice Skating Rink Hours

A variety of hockey organizations have been preparing for their 2011-12 seasons. Morgan Park, Irving, Piedmont, Duluth Heights, Woodland, and Portman are at our centers. There are also hockey organizations at Glen Avon (Como Park) and Congdon School. These organizations run entirely on volunteer help and most with a partnership with the City. The Hockey organizations located at our centers, in exchange for the use of the building and utilities, maintain ice and open building hours for the general public. This is a huge task and we thank them for their volunteer efforts. City staff and volunteers are working together to make these rinks happen.

The weather still isn't cooperating but dedicated volunteers and staff will be at the rinks to make ice as soon as the temperature drops. The following locations have provided us with these hours, depending upon weather and available volunteers.

PORTMAN

Regular Hours: Monday to Friday 3:00-9:00 PM (concessions open at 5:00)
Saturday 11:00-8:00 PM and Sunday 11:00-5:00 PM
School Break Hours: Jan. 27 and Feb 17 (early release): 1:00 - 9:00 PM
Feb. 20 - 24: 11:00 - 9:00 PM

CONGDON

4:00-8:30 PM Monday – Thursday, 4:00-9:00 PM Friday, 12:00-7:00 PM Saturday, 12:00-6:00 PM Sunday

WOODLAND

Monday-Friday 5:30-8:30 PM, Saturday 8:30-5:30 PM, and Sunday 11:30-5:30 PM. School Holidays will be on a volunteer basis during the day (no set schedule) and 5:30-8:30 PM for the evenings.

GLEN AVON

Monday-Friday, 5:00-9:00 PM and Saturday, Sunday, School Holidays 11:00-9:00 PM

LOWER CHESTER

Regular week days: 3:00 PM – 7:00 PM
Week Ends: 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM
All times are affected by weather and available volunteers.

LAFAYETTE

Ice Maintained, Building Hours dependent on volunteers

DULUTH HEIGHTS

Hours: Monday-Thursday 5:30-8:30, Saturdays 12-4

PIEDMONT

Monday-Friday 5:00-8:30 PM, Saturday 12:00-8:00 PM, and Sunday 1:00-5:00 PM.
School Breaks: Monday-Friday 12:00-8:30 PM

LINCOLN PARK

Monday-Thursday 3:30-9:30, Friday 3:30-11:00 PM
Saturday 10:00 AM -11:00 PM and Sunday 10:00 AM-9:30 PM

IRVING

Monday-Friday 4:00 PM-8:00 PM

NORTON PARK

Ice maintained, Building hours dependent on volunteers

MORGAN PARK

Monday – Friday 5:00 PM – 9:00 PM
Sat/ Sun 12:00 – 8:00 PM

STOWE

Ice maintained for school and public use. No building hours.

Cross Country Ski Trails

Although there is not enough snow to groom the trails yet, you can keep informed by calling the ski hotline at 730-4321. The City is working with Spirit Mountain and the Cross Country Ski Club to incorporate the 22 km of cross country ski trail into the City's system. The work on this will continue through the winter and we will keep you informed.

Family Fun Fest will be held at the DECC on Saturday, February 26 from 10 am to 5 pm and Sunday, February 27 from 11 am to 4 pm. We have an informational display area at the Fest. This is a great opportunity for Parks and Recreation to let the public know about the opportunities available in our park system. There are many activities planned and many organizations have display areas. See the website: <http://lundeenproductions.com/funfest/>

2012 Zoo Events

February 11	Paw de Deux
March 31	Earth Hour
April 7	Easter Egg-Stravaganza
May 13	Mothers' Day & Teddy Bear Clinic
May 15/June 15	Membership Drive
June 7	M.A.D. Safari (Member Appreciation Day)
June 17	Wild About Dad (Fathers' Day)
August 2	Spirit Valley Days Parade
August 4	Run Like an Animal (run/walk)
August 16	Wine Tasting Event
September 9	Lion's Birthday & Grandparents' Day
October 13 & 20	Boo at the Zoo
December 8	Berlin's Birthday & Photos with Santa

Updates from Shawna MullenEardley, MN GreenCorps member

"The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now." ~Anonymous

Twenty years ago I wasn't planting trees. In fact, I was only just beginning to learn about the many benefits trees have to offer. Quite frankly, I was more interested in playing with Barbies and going to my best friend's birthday party at the roller rink. That's right: I was in elementary school. But now, I will be planting trees. And counting them. And educating people about them. I will be doing this as a part of my service as an urban forestry GreenCorps member working for the City of Duluth. My 11 month service began in mid-October, and over the course of my service term, I will be working on a variety of forestry related projects. I hope to make a substantial dent in taking inventory of the city's street and park trees with the help of many amazing volunteers. With that inventory information, the Tree Commission will be producing a tree master plan for the city, which I will be helping out with. I will also be establishing a gravel bed nursery, which is a relatively new method of cultivating trees to be planted along city streets. And finally, organizing Arbor Day events and educational outreach this spring will be keeping me busy as well. The City of Duluth was recently re-established as a Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation, and I look forward to keeping it that way by serving the City of Duluth in ways such as increasing awareness, educating, and encouraging city officials and residents alike to care about our urban forest. It's going to be a great year!

Shawna has inventoried about 15% of Duluth's boulevard trees and is helping with the planning of the 2012 Living Green Conference to be held February 4. Shawna also got our paperwork into the Arbor Day Foundation to be a Tree City USA for 2011.

Updates from Judy Gibbs, Trails Coordinator

Tom Johnson, City of Duluth Engineer, inspected and mapped the failing culverts west of Spirit Mountain on the DWP (Duluth, Winnipeg, and Pacific) Railroad grade. This old railroad bed is a critical link for the Duluth Traverse. Replacing these culverts will be a major step forward toward the goal of the Traverse crossing from east of the Zoo to Beck's Road.

The Duluth Cross Country Ski Club (DXC) is working on mapping and signage for the ski trails. That should help skiers more easily navigate their way on our trails. The signs will be temporary for this season and feedback will be welcome prior to making permanent signs.

UMD's Maintenance Operations class members created and presented master plans for Spirit Mountain and Hawk Ridge to City staff and members of the organizations. Some creative ideas were presented to help improve operations at both locations.

The Safe and Walkable Hillside Coalition meet to recap accomplishments over the past year by them and their partners. These included: Complete Streets Resolution, Hillfest 2010 & 2011, Bicycle Network Plan, Duluth Trail and Bikeway Master Plan, Sidewalk Assessment for the entire City, Duluth Digs, Hillside Parks Bike Racks, 4th Street Public Arts Garden, 6th Ave E Re-design Study, and a Health Impact Assessment.

Duluth organizations have been awarded more than \$500,000 in grants to help extend and connect the City's network of recreational trails

Duluth News Tribune Article

The City received notice just in time for Christmas that two Minnesota Legacy Grant requests have been approved. The money comes from the sales tax increase voters approved in 2008 to support outdoors, clean water, parks and arts projects. The grants total \$538,000:

- \$288,000 for a Cross-City Trail, which should eventually link Duluth's Lakewalk to the Munger Trail in West Duluth.
- \$250,000 to help the Cyclists of Gitchee Gumee Shores begin work on the Duluth Traverse, a natural-surface trail running along the length of Duluth's ridgeline and catering to mountain bike riders.

Both projects are ambitious undertakings, and the grants will be sufficient to move plans forward but not to completion.

Adam Sundberg, chairman of COGGS, estimates the total cost of building out the Duluth Traverse will fall somewhere between \$1 million and \$2 million, depending on its final design.

COGGS applied for \$500,000 in Legacy money, and while the nonprofit received only half of what it sought, Sundberg said he was extremely pleased. He noted that up until now, the largest grant the organization had ever received was for \$10,000.

Kathy Bergen, director of Duluth's parks and recreation department, said Duluth faced stiff competition for the grants.

"I think a lot of our success has to do with the fact that both of these proposed trails would be to connect things," she said. "The DNR is big on connecting trails and communities to one another."

Bergen said she believes Duluth's comprehensive plan for an entire trail network made a positive impression on evaluators. "It shows we have solid commitment from our community," she said.

Mayor Don Ness has set a lofty goal for the city, saying Duluth should be “the premier trail city in North America.”

This is the second round of grant funding the city has received for its Cross-City Trail. The newest grant should allow the pathway to be extended from 37th Avenue West to 24th Avenue West, according to Project Engineer Matt Decur.

He said much of 2012 will be spent finalizing the alignment of the path, which is contingent on acquiring needed property and easements. Decur expects construction to begin in 2013 and the new segment to be ready for use by 2014.

Plans call for the path to cut across the freeway at 37½ Avenue West and run eastward below I-35 on the upper side, until 29th Avenue West, where it will jog up to Superior Street for five blocks, before shooting down to the expressway at 24th Avenue West. Decur said preliminary drawings show a 10-foot-wide paved pathway, separated from motorized traffic.

Sundberg expects funding for the Duluth Traverse will be put to work in 2012, constructing 3 to 4 miles of mountain bike path at Lester Park. He said COGGS has been working to rehab, reroute and legitimize what had previously been unauthorized trails in the park.

The next challenge will be for COGGS to develop a professionally designed trail system at Mission Creek in the Fond du Lac area at the western end of the proposed Duluth Traverse. Sundberg envisions something akin to the Cuyuna Lakes Trail network in the Crosby/Ironton area.

After that, connecting different mountain bike trail systems across the city will become COGGS' primary focus, he said. Sundberg predicts the improvements at Lester Park and Mission Creek will help generate support for the communitywide initiative.

“We want to give everyone a taste of how fun it is to use a trail built by a professional,” he said.

COGGS already has raised enough money to provide the required 10 percent local match for the Legacy grant, according to Sundberg. He said the group also will look to leverage the state money by applying for a federal transportation grant that requires a dollar-for-dollar match, possibly parlaying \$250,000 into \$500,000.

Both COGGS and the City also plan to seek more support as additional rounds of Legacy Grant funding become available.

Changes . . .

- We are monitoring garbage and recycling use to determine the correct size containers are placed at our centers and parks and that the pick up times are working for the needs. Contact Pamela at 591-0699 if you have questions about this.
- We are encouraging everyone to recycle! New containers are now located inside our centers with outdoor bins for pick up.
- The Parks and Recreation office will be moving to City Hall in the near future. We'll let you know when the timeline is firmed up.

The City of Duluth Parks and Recreation has one of the most extensive park systems in the country. The City owns and maintains 11,862 acres including the following special areas:

- 129 municipal parks, playgrounds and public places
- Neighborhood community recreation centers
- Bayfront Festival Park
- 2 golf courses, each offering 27 holes
- Keene's Creek Dog Park
- Disc golf courses
- Skatepark at Wheeler Field Athletic Complex
- Lake Superior Zoo
- Wade Municipal Stadium
- Wheeler Field Athletic Complex
- Year round ice skating at the Duluth Heritage Sports Center
- Swimming at Park Point Beach
- Over 40 miles of mountain biking trails
- 55 miles of hiking trails
- Over 7 miles of the Duluth Lakewalk along the shores of Lake Superior
- 45 miles of snowmobile trails
- 70 kilometers of groomed cross-country ski trails
- 13 beautiful self-guided hiking trails

Currently, Duluth has 160 miles of trails within the city limits, including 40 miles of the national North Country Trail/Superior Hiking Trail, a hiking trail spanning the backbone of our 26-mile long city, connecting all of its neighborhoods. Duluth's trail system is incredibly diverse from cascading waterfalls in the gorge of Congdon Park, towering sand dunes on Park Point and waterfowl-filled habitats of the St. Louis River along the Western Waterfront Trail. Trails range from accessible to rugged. There is something for everyone here in Duluth.